

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T CAIRO 17881

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS
SUBJECT: AMOCO DRILLING IN GULF OF SUEZ: EGYPTIAN POSITION

REF: CAIRO 17727

1. FAHMY TELEPHONED THIS MORNING TO SAY HE HAD SENT A MEMORANDUM TO PRESIDENT SADAT ON OUR FOUR POINT PROPOSAL AND HIS ALTERNATIVE THREE POINT PROPOSAL ON REFERENCE SUBJECT. IN THAT MEMORANDUM, HE HAD SIMPLY PROPOSED TO SADAT THAT USG BE ASKED TO ACT AS MIDDLE-MAN IN THIS MATTER. WHENEVER AMOCO RIG IS TO BE DEPLOYED TO EASTERN GULF OF SUEZ, GOE WOULD LET US KNOW. USG COULD THEN WORK IT OUT WITH ISRAELIS. SADAT HAD JUST APPROVED HIS RECOMMENDATION. IN ABOVE CONTEXT, HE ASKED THAT WE ADVISE GOE WHEN AMOCO RIG CAN BE SENT BACK TO 304.1.

2. I TOLD HIM THAT, SINCE HE HAD REQUESTED ME TO DO SO, I WOULD REPORT HIS REQUEST. I HAD TO TELL HIM IN ALL CANDOR, HOWEVER, THAT I SAW LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL ACCEPT HIS PROPOSED PROCEDURE. WHATEVER ITS LEGAL BASIS, IT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE A PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WE FACE.

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3. PREDICATABLY, FAHMY COUNTERED THAT (A) THIS PROPOSAL IS CONSISTENT WITH GOE AND WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD TO BE USG VIEWS ON THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONTROVERSY, (B) IT IS A PERFECTLY APPROPRIATE PROCEDURE IN THE CONTEXT OF AVOWED USG INTEREST IN PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF AN AMERICAN COMPANY, AMOCO. HE ALSO NOTED THAT AREA OF

WESTERN SINAI NEAREST TO 304.1 SITE IS PART OF TERRITORY RETURNED TO EGYPT UNDER SINAI II, HENCE IS NO LONGER IN ISRAELI HANDS. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE ARGUED, EVEN THE ISRAELI CONTENTION OF COMBAT BELLIGERENT RIGHTS, WHICH HE HAD BEEN PLEASED TO HEAR OUR LEGAL PEOPLE DO NOT ACCEPT (STATE 308879), DOES NOT APPLY. HE REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE GOE ATTACHES TO GETTING THIS ISSUE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED BEFORE YOU LEAVE OFFICE.

4. COMMENT: UNFORTUNATELY, THE AMOCO AFFAIR IS BECOMING A MINOR "CAUSE CELEBRE" WITH FAHMY. IN HIS TYPICAL FASHION, HE IS CASTING THE ISSUE IN TERMS OF THE CREDIBILITY OF THE USG WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO ASSIST GOE IN A MATTER WHERE OUR VIEWS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL POSITION ARE SIMILAR AND WHERE AN AMERICAN INTEREST IS INVOLVED. I HAVE TOLD HIM REPEATEDLY THAT HIS PURPOSE IS OBVIOUS: HE IS SEEKING, THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF AN AMERICAN INTEREST, TO HAVE USG FIGHT THE ISSUE ON EGYPT'S BEHALF. WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT, THE ISSUE INVOLVES EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI RELATIONS AS MUCH AS AN AMERICAN INTEREST AND, IF IT IS TO BE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, OUR FOUR POINTS STILL OFFER THE BEST WAY TO DO SO. NOR DO WE BELIEVE THAT THEY COMPROMISE GOE'S LEGAL POSITION. FAHMY REMAINS ADAMANT AND ARGUES THAT OUR FOUR POINTS DO COMPROMISE GOE LEGAL POSITION. AS RECOMMENDED PARA 5 REFTTEL, I WONDER IF ANOTHER APPROACH TO THE ISRAELIS MIGHT NOT BE FEASIBLE IN AN EFFORT TO GET THEM TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION. A LITTLE FORTHCOMINGNESS NOW ON THE 304.1 ISSUE MIGHT MAKE THE EGYPTIANS A BIT MORE TOLERANT THESE NEXT FEW
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MONTHS ON MATTERS AFFECTING THE PACE OF THE ME PEACE PROCESS. PLEASE INSTRUCT ME WHAT YOU WISH ME TO SAY TO FAHMY IN RESPONSE TO HIS LATEST REQUEST.
EILTS

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